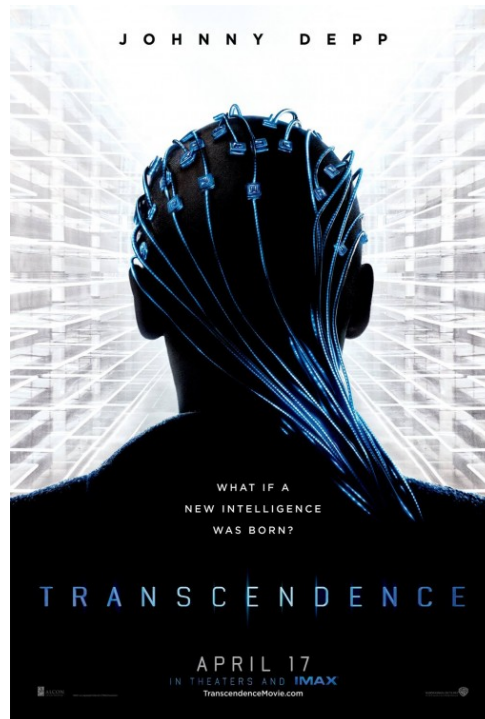


TRANSCENDENCE

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



Brainiac love is alive and well – sort of. *Transcendence* is one of those mind-bending what-if-we-could tales that is just bizarre enough to one day be possible. We see Johnny Depp as a brilliant scientist who, with his wife (another intellectual overachiever), struggles with the idea of naturally enhanced artificial intelligence. There it is. In a nanosecond, the world is changed and the solution is marvelous and frightening all at the same time. As with all giant leaps in the world of science, this one has serious consequences.

Just how far are we willing to go as a species to conquer what we used to believe is the natural process of natural selection? What would we sacrifice and what would we be willing to do or to give up to make the world a better place? Love? Autonomy? Humanity? These are very complicated questions for big minds trying to come up with solutions. Imagine a stronger worker with the ability to heal instantly. These are noble goals, but are they realistic ones? It all looks good until you are faced with just who is going to control all of the applications that genius and nanotechnology have to offer. If we could invent the technology to become one with our machines, then who will control who and what is left of the creator?

Pretty heavy stuff for us to contemplate. The questions raised in this movie are more profound than the solutions given to us here. Just asking those questions reminds us that we are not machines and that we can choose our own destinies for ill or for good, and if we give that up to the ones and zeros – heaven, helps us all.

Remember Hal the computer in *2001, A Space Odyssey*? How about *Westworld*? And who could forget *AI* (Artificial Intelligence)? All these movies remind us that there is danger in messing with the natural order of things and that there is only so far we should go before we lose our moral compass. Are we the experiment or the experimenters? Who decides how far we go and who decides when we need to stop? Just because we can do something, doesn't mean we should. In *Transcendence*, we see just how far human love will go to transcend the limitations of being human.

Johnny Depp sans makeup makes a pretty believable nerdy but cute man who loves his wife and his work, and we are never sure in which order until the end. One thing is sure though, If you like movies that make you think, this will certainly generate a few musings about man and machine and where we might wind up in a decade or two.

I liked *Transcendence*. It is a good popcorn movie. I give it three brains.

